# Utah Program Improvement Planning System (UPIPS) EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT THOMAS EDISON SOUTH CHARTER SCHOOL January 14, 2008

The attached report contains the results of the first two phases (Self-Assessment Process and On-Site Validation Visit) of the Utah Special Education Program Improvement Planning System (UPIPS). This Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process is conducted by the Utah State Office of Education (USOE) Special Education Services (SES), as required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part B. The process is designed to focus resources on improving results for students with disabilities through enhanced partnerships between charter school and district programs, USOE-SES, the Utah Personnel Development Center, parents, and advocates.

The first phase of this process included the development of a Program Improvement Plan. The second phase, On-Site Validation, conducted in Thomas Edison South Charter School on November 7, 2007, included student record reviews, interviews with school administrators, teachers, and parents. Parent surveys were also mailed to a small sample of parents.

This report contains a more complete description of the process utilized to collect data and to determine strengths, areas out of compliance with the requirements of IDEA, and recommendations for improvement in each of the core IDEA areas.

## **Areas of Strength**

The validation team found the following:

### **General Supervision**

- Thomas Edison Charter School-South Campus has grown quickly and many staff and parents have stepped up to stabilize their evolution.
- Self-Assessment review has made the LEA aware of need for attention to detail and responsibility.
- Spaulding training will be required of all teachers.
- Staff and teacher development trainings will occur in 3-month intervals throughout the school year, allowing for specialized training in various areas as needed or required.
- An on-site instructional specialist will provide assistance and support to teachers.
- A handbook on school policies and procedures is given to each student and parent.
- The special education file review has value in training special educators about the need for specific forms and the importance of timelines.
- Special education file review helps special educators identify specific need of each student and familiarizes them with parent and teacher concerns.
- Special education files are well organized and maintained in secure cabinets with posted Access Authorization lists.
- Special education files contained Records of Access to ensure a complete record of those accessing the records.
- Prereferral interventions for students receiving speech services were documented, including data showing intervention results.
- Initial evaluations were completed within the State required 45 school days from consent for speech evaluations.
- Students with disabilities are provided instruction either in the general education classroom or in small group, pull-out sessions.
- Student CRT scores are included in special education files.
- New teachers are provided with a four week training in the summer, prior to school starting.
   Additional training is provided throughout the school year for all teachers.
- Progress on file compliance is evident in all reviewed special education files.
- All students receive instruction in small class environments with a small pupil-teacher ratio.
- Parents stated that the school is a welcoming environment for them and their student.
- All interviewed personnel described the school staff as happy and supportive.
- School staff could describe special education processes.
- Special education staff are aware of professional development needs and actively seek assistance from the USOE.

- Evaluations are complete, contain a variety of assessments, and are described in detailed Evaluation Summary Reports.
- Eligibility determinations are current and in special education files.
- Physical education is available for all students.

### **Parent Involvement**

- Parent involvement is a key element to the success of the school.
- TECS-SC staff have developed good relationships and communication with parents while working towards meeting their wishes and interests.
- All parents and guardians become members of the TECS-SC parent organization.
- Parents are encouraged to visit school frequently and take an active role in the education of their children.
- Parents are invited to school trainings.
- Consent for evaluation is obtained from parents before the evaluation begins.
- Parents are active participants on the TECS-SC UPIPS Steering Committee.
- Parents receive copies of all required forms, as documented by parent signatures and parent reports.
- Parents were included in all meetings for eligibility and IEPs and reported having an opportunity to provide input regarding their student's needs.
- Parents described volunteering efforts and the positive effect they feel it has on their student's education.
- Progress reports to parents for speech services were included in special education files.
- Parents described instructional modifications made to provide differentiated instruction at the level of the student.
- Parents receive Procedural Safeguards at least annually, as documented in special education files and reported by parents.
- Parents reported positive results from their student's speech program.
- During the focus groups, it was reported that TECS-SC teachers listen to parents and respond to communication in person or by email.
- Special education files contained documentation that parents receive written Notice of Meetings and prior written notice of proposed actions.

### Free Appropriate Public Education in the Least Restrictive Environment

- Special education staff is familiar with overall requirements of providing services to children with disabilities.
- Staff is caring and actively seeks ways to help students and family members.
- Additional special education staff was hired along with paraprofessionals to provide additional services.
- Special education files contained evidence of recent, ongoing file reviews.
- IEPs contained measurable goals which address all areas of student need as identified in the PLAAFP statement.
- PLAAFP statements and goals for students receiving speech services were measurable and contained current data, as well as described how the disability affects the student's progress in the general curriculum.
- IEPs contained specific special education and related services which described the location, amount, and frequency of the services.
- The school administrator described when a FBA and BIP are required and appropriate.
- Students with disabilities are included in the general curriculum, general classroom, and extracurricular activities, as appropriate.
- School staff are provided with access to IEPs for students that they instruct.
- Student behavior is tracked by the school administrator so that interventions can address repetitive behaviors.
- IEPs are current and contained in special education files.
- IEPs documented the projected date of implementation.

# **Transitions**

Thomas Edison South Charter School does not have students of transition ages at this time.

# **Disproportionality**

- Thomas Edison Charter School South Campus reported 0 suspensions exceeding 10 days in a school year.
- During the FFY 2005 APR, TECS-SC did not have a disproportionate amount of suspensions.
- Special education files contained documentation of primary home language.

# **Areas of Systemic Noncompliance\***

- Evaluation & Eligibility: Review of Existing Data forms not included for reevaluations and evaluation procedures not followed for students with autism (medical history not documented).
- Child Find: Child find process not implemented consistently across all grade levels, school-wide.
- Transfer Procedures: Transfer procedures are not implemented for all incoming students with disabilities.
- Progress to Parents: IEPs do not document how progress on IEP goals will be measured and do not document how progress will be reported to parents.
- IEP Content: ESY decisions were not documented by the end of the school year and statewide assessment not addressed.
- Timelines: Placement not reviewed at least annually.

<sup>\*</sup>These areas represent items where the visiting team could not locate appropriate documentation of requirements of IDEA 2004 and Utah State Special Education Rules in student records or other data sources.